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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 007606

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/RUS, OES/STC, EB/TPP/ATP, EB/TPP/BTA
HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ
USAID FOR BLANCHET, TROSTLE AND CARROLL
FAS FOR ITP/MACKE/THOMAS, CMP/DLP/WETZEL
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS
VIENNA PASS APHIS
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE

E.O. 12958:N/A

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SUBJECT: Second Avian Influenza Outbreak in Turkey

Ref: (A) Ankara 5119 (B) Ankara 6105 (C) Ankara 6138
(D) Ankara 6232 (E) Ankara 6291 (F) Ankara 6430
(G) Ankara 6514 (H) Ankara 6605 (G) Ankara 7034
(J) Ankara 7318

1. (U) Summary. On December 27, the Government of Turkey announced a second outbreak of avian influenza (AI) in the country. This one occurred in the East, near the Armenian border, in an area where there are only backyard farms and no commercial production operations. The government took all of the necessary quarantine measures. Turkish officials confirmed that the virus was H5 type, but are waiting for test results to determine the exact subtype. End summary.

Outbreak in Rural Area in the East

2. (U) On December 27, 2005, the Ministry of Agriculture released an official statement announcing a second AI outbreak in the country. The outbreak occurred in the town of Aralik in the province of Igdir, near the Armenian border. This area is not near any commercial poultry operations. Villagers use the poultry (turkeys and laying hens) for their own consumption.

Government Action

3. (U) The Igdir provincial authorities notified the GOT on December 15, 2005, of some suspicious bird deaths in the region. The GOT went to the area, discovered 1200 dead poultry there, and immediately sent samples to the laboratory to test for the cause of death. In addition, as a temporary precautionary measure, the government simultaneously established quarantine protection in the ten kilometer radius around the center of Aralik. In order to prevent the spread of the disease, the GOT also killed 359 various poultry, including turkeys, and promised compensation to the farmers.

4. (U) On December 26, the GOT obtained the lab results, which showed that the birds died from the H5 strain of AI. At this point, the GOT took the appropriate action and made the quarantine a permanent measure, even though the outbreak did not take place near any commercial operations. The GOT continues to monitor this area. There have been no new deaths since the December 15 incident. The GOT also reported this new outbreak to the OIE and to neighboring countries.

5. (U) In the press release, the government confirmed the presence of the H5 strain in the affected poultry. On December 28, samples were sent to the laboratory in Britain to determine whether it is the H5N1 subtype of AI. The government expects to receive the results by early next week.

Industry Comments

5. (U) During their annual board meeting on December 27, the Turkish Poultry Association (BESD-BIR) learned of the second AI outbreak. As a result, they contacted Protection and Control and Bornova Veterinary Research Institute (the lab in Izmir that tests for AI) to verify the news. After confirmation of the lab results, they spoke with the Deputy Undersecretary for Protection and Control and urged him not to make a press release on this topic until after the New Year in order to avoid a potential drop in turkey consumption during this high season.

7. (U) The GOT, BESD-BIR and other industry contacts

stressed that people should not be concerned about this incident since it has been contained and occurred in a rural region of the country very far from any commercial operations.

WILSON